

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## September 2024

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### *#SENDSpotlight*

Well done to our primary school pupils receiving SEND support and with an EHCP who did much better in being able to reach the expected standard in their phonics, reading/writing/maths test results for last year.

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### National Publications

At the beginning of the summer the ISOS partnership published an independent report [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND](#) aimed at questioning the future of the SEND system. Everyone who has experience of the SEND system knows first-hand the challenges being faced, so whilst a sobering read, it does make a number of useful recommendations which we hope will be taken into account alongside the national SEND & AP Improvement Plan.

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### National training for schools

- BeReady are offering a fully funded, CPD accredited training programmes focused on SEND, inclusion and staff and student wellbeing. These are Level 3 courses relating to SEND Teaching Assistants, Early Years Educators with SEND and wellbeing champions. More information is available online [Be Future Ready](#)
  - The Council for Disabled Children are providing 2.5hr sessions on 'Improving Inclusion in Schools' for support staff, recently qualified teachers, leaders and practitioner in October and November. More information and sign-up details are available online: [CDC Events & Training calendar](#)
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### Additional Needs Board Meeting

The first meeting of the Joint Additional Needs Board took place on 6th September. The key messages were:

- The Board considered data around digital poverty in the borough to understand whether the focus on online information (such as the local offer) was disadvantaging some families. Members were advised of the support families may be able to receive to get online through the councils [Here2Help](#) approach and were asked to publicise this with services working with families who may benefit. The council is looking to develop printed documents reflecting the most used pages on the local offer but were keen to hear from families on any information they would find helpful in other formats.
- The Board received an update on the health [Support Whilst Waiting](#) website, which provides signposting to services as well as the most recent waiting list information. 80% of users who fed back on the website survey reported that they were not aware of the support available before visiting the page so members were asked to continue to promote this to families their services are working with. This is in addition to the local area partnership working together to look at actions to reduce waiting times.
- The Board discussed the increased vulnerability neurodiverse children can have in relation to being able to stay safe. Members agreed that “safety” should be a key priority of the strategic work and took away an action to look at the community safety training and support offer in this area to seek further developments.

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### Additional Needs Strategy

The local area partnership will now begin to evaluate the impact of the activity contained within the 2024 action plan in order to inform improvement areas for the next year of the strategy.

As always, the lived experience of children and young people, and their parent carers, is central to this evaluation so we are asking everyone again to give us your views. The surveys will be live from **30<sup>th</sup> September to 1st November** and can be found on our SEND Engagement Hub [Additional Needs Strategy | Your Voice Solihull \(engagementhq.com\)](#)

This year we have also developed a survey for professionals working within the SEND arena across education, health and care – so please do take a moment to share your views too.

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### Head of SEND Services

At the start of September Amanda Hana (previous EHCP Service Manager) took on the new role of Head of SEND Operations. Amanda will retain responsibility for the overall EHCP system (and her previous role will be recruited to) and take over leadership responsibility of the Educational Psychology Service and SISS. This post is responsible for all SEND operations and casework for children and young people in Solihull.

Charlotte Jones remains as Head of SEND Strategy and Transformation with a focus on the various aspects of SEND strategy and Delivering Better Value.

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## BSol ICB update

Birmingham and Solihull ICB are pleased to share with you the Children and Young People's Support Whilst Waiting web page (link below).

We understand that the length of time waiting for services in Solihull can be a frustrating and worrying time for all concerned. We have received feedback from young people, parents, carers, and families and have listened to those concerns. As a system, leads of services and health professionals are prioritising review of children and young people's mental health and community therapy services for improvement.

Working together with Solihull Parents and Carers Voices Forum Chair and leads, partners across Solihull have come together to ensure support and signposting is easily accessible, alongside up to date information about waiting times which can also be found on the web page. We hope that this information provides support and improves the experience of all involved during the wait period until transition to appointment.

We welcome the opportunity to hear from you via the survey on the web page about your experience and welcome any suggestions you may have about how this can be improved.

**[SEND support available to residents in Solihull :: NHS Birmingham and Solihull \(icb.nhs.uk\)](https://icb.nhs.uk)**

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## EHCP Service

We are currently trialling an ICT system for schools to use when completing annual reviews. It is hoped this new system will improve the experience, reduce work load for schools and enable documents to be submitted to the Local Authority in a timely manner. Identified pilot schools will be trialling the use of this during the Autumn Term.

Thank you to the parents/carers of Electively Home Educated children/young people who completed the online survey regarding annual reviews and suitability checks. We are currently going through the results and will send an update on the outcome to those involved before the end of this month.

Transition reviews should be taking this this half term for primary age pupils who are in a transition year i.e. those in Nursey 2, year 6 and Year 2 if currently in an infant school. Can schools please send the EHCP service the dates of these planned reviews by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

In addition, transition reviews should be being booked for year 11 and year 12+ in a transition year and these must be held before the end of November 2024. Please send the dates of the annual reviews to the EHCP service by the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

As stated in the Code of Practice we have a duty to share finalised EHCP's with health. During the annual review process and EHC needs assessment process we will be asking for the GP contact details to enable us to share finalised EHCP's direct with GP's. This will support the collaborative working across health and education services.

We said goodbye to Kerrie Murphy from our tribunal team in August. We have welcomed the following new EHCP Officers to the team: Jane Rhodes has joined the Assessment Team, Joanna Green and Katherine MacVie Brookes have joined Review Team B, Emily Woodcock and Laura O'Reagan have joined Review Team A.

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## Early Years

### Summer celebration event – early years super stars

In the summer we held a celebration event for the Solihull practitioners and providers who had achieved certificates and Mark of Achievements through the DfE Early Years Education Recovery Programme and Dingley's Promise.

Thanks to all of those who joined local authority representatives and colleagues for a drink and a snack. It was lovely to hear people exchanging experiences and celebrating their achievements. Achievements included the DfE Professional Development Programme completion, Level 3 SENCo training and Dingley's Mark of Achievement.

We know this is only a small number of the training and achievements early years practitioners have celebrated. 122 people have completed the Dingley's Promise Voice of the Child training, 22 are part way through and 409 have just started. This training costs £50 per person through usual routes. This would save providers in the local authority £27,650 if all 553 providers complete this module alone. We will have access to 10 modules which, if we make the most of this free access, will be a great investment in our workforce.



DfE have announced further training for early years as the recovery programme comes to an end. In September 2024 they will be publishing *additional resources for early years educators aimed at supporting children with developmental differences and special educational needs and disabilities*. These resources are a new free online module that will be added to DfE's Early years child development training and Early Years SEND assessment guidance and resources which will be available on the [Help for Early Years Providers](#) platform.

### **Evaluations received after early years team support**

A big thankyou for everyone who took the time to return and evaluation to the team. We really appreciate your comments and this helps us to review our offer and find out what works for you. Some comments received below.

### **Early Years Inclusion Support Practitioner**



A was amazing. Offered so many strategies and knowledge towards the development with B. Easy to ask questions and able to talk to about anything I was worried or concerned about. She was consistent with times and appointments and always communicated throughout. Her ability to support in so many areas of development but my mind at ease and when she left from a visit I felt confident with the resources she put in place.

*C was just out of this world. The support and understanding for our family was 10/10. She was such a lovely lady and I will truly miss her.*

D was amazing with my little boy, E loved seeing her. was very helpful in answering any questions I had.

### **Early Years Adviser**

I have been able to understand where I need to develop further and what I implement to develop my staff team

*It's been good to feel that the children's voice is being heard and I feel really positive*

It provided a great opportunity to reflect on practice and provision.

## Area SENCo

Things that were appreciated



*The team's support is invaluable to us as practitioners supporting children with SEND and us as a setting with referral and processes.*

Can see how much hard work has been put into improving the advice, support and resources now available on the website.

*Over the summer we have reflected on the suggestions received to see how we can best continue to help.*

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## Parent Carer Surveys 2024- on behalf of Dingley's Promise

Dingley's Promise has asked us to distribute these far and wide to parents and carers of children who attend a setting and those who don't. The deadline for completions is 31st October 2024

Non settings survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K5K7NP7>

Settings survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YTFMQ8B>

Dingley's Promise uses this information to inform practice and as part of their conversation with DfE to inform their early years SEND picture.

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## Employment and Skills Support

There is a range of support on offer from the Council's Employment and Skills Team to help residents get ready for work from assessing career aspirations to developing CV and

interviewing skills. There are also programmes connecting job seekers with supportive local employers. Please fill out [this form](#) and share briefly your circumstances in the optional message to get support.

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### Stay informed about career events and information

Young people, parents and carers can find out about the latest career information and upcoming event in the borough with this [information page](#). It covers various post-16 options including apprenticeships to help young people plan their careers.

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### Solihull Apprenticeship Show

The event showcases apprenticeships at all levels. Attendees will have the chance to speak to employers and training providers from a range of sectors, as well as current apprentices. Anyone aged 15-18 are encouraged to come along on Wednesday 16 October 2024 from 2:30-3:30pm during the quieter hour, while the show will carry on till 7:00pm. Sign up with [this link](#) now.

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### What is private fostering and how you can help

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made without the involvement of a local authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 years for people with a disability) by someone other than a parent or close relative, for 28 days or more.

Please call the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team on 0121 788 4300 if you are caring for, or if you know anyone who is caring for someone else's child.

[Quick guide to private fostering](#)

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# UNBOUNDED THEATRE

DRAMA | GAMES | CONNECTION



We are looking for **young people with disabilities** aged **11-19** to be part of our **weekly evening drama workshops**. We will be using physical non-verbal drama activities to unlock our creativity, confidence and fun!

**Date:** Every Tuesday, 4.30PM - 6.30PM

**Location:** The Core Theatre, Solihull, B91 3RG

**Price:** £3 per session (weekly)

**For more information or to book, please contact:**

**[lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk](mailto:lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk)**

This service is funded by the Short Breaks Grant Scheme.

If you think other people you know would be interested in this newsletter please encourage them to [sign up on the Council website here](#).



If you have any feedback on the newsletter, or suggestions for future items please email and let us know: [jand@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:jand@solihull.gov.uk)

**Charlotte Jones**

**Head of Strategy - SEND & Additional Needs**

